

# 2005 Session Update

Senator Tracey J. Eide

30th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Dear Neighbor:

The 2005 legislative session was difficult, but I think, quite productive. Working together with my colleagues in the House and Senate, we passed legislation that will improve our public schools, help our economy and improve the quality of life for working people and families in south King County.

Education remained my top priority. We passed the best school-construction budget in history, and fully funded voter-approved initiatives to lower class sizes and retain excellent teachers.

Many thanks to all of you who called or sent letters and e-mails to my office. I could not do my job well without your help and input. It continues to be a pleasure and an honor to serve the 30th District. As always, please contact me if I can assist you in any way.

Sincerely,



Senator Tracey J. Eide

## Senator Tracey J. Eide Majority Floor Leader

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### Standing Committees:

- Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education
- International Trade & Economic Development
- Transportation
- Rules

### Other Legislative Committees:

- Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities
- Member, Legislative Transportation Committee
- Member, Washington State School Safety Advisory Committee
- Member, Title and Registration Advisory Committee (TRAC)
- Advisory Board Member, Our Sister's House, Tacoma
- Joint Select Committee on Education Restructuring
- Chair, National Telematics Committee, National Conference of State Legislatures
- Member, Washington State Recycling Task Force
- Co-Chair, Commute Trip Reduction Task Force
- Alternate Member, Council of State Government, Western Water Policy Committee
- House of Representatives, 1993-1994, Assistant Majority Whip
- PTA and dedicated school volunteer for more than a decade
- Former Board Member, King County Disability and Retirement Board for Police and Firefighters
- Federal Way Human Services Commission, 1997-1998, Chair
- Washington State Community Economic Revitalization Board
- Joint Select Committee on Secondary Education

# Education

Public education is an investment in our future. The state constitution declares that education is the paramount duty of the Legislature.

As a PTA mom whose son is a senior at Federal Way High School, I have a personal connection to our public schools. My daughter graduated from public schools and is currently a senior at Western Washington University. Two members of my family are teachers.

I first ran for office with the goal of improving our public schools, so I am very proud of our accomplishments this session. Here is a short list of some of our successes:

- **The Federal Way Internet Academy** provides high-quality education to students via the Internet. State-certified teachers provide instruction to students from kindergarten through high school. This year, I authored a bill that ensures the academy will continue to receive state funding and establishes accountability standards. The bill was signed by Gov. Christine Gregoire.
- **Class size reductions.** Initiative 728 was overwhelmingly passed by voters five years ago, but it was not funded in the last budget cycle. This session, we funded the initiative, which will reduce class sizes so that children can get more personalized attention in class.
- **Paying teachers what they're worth.** Another measure that was overwhelmingly supported by voters five years ago is Initiative 732. The measure was meant to provide much-needed cost-of-living increases to teachers and other public school employees. This measure was also ignored in the last budgeting cycle, but we were able to fully fund it this year.
- **Every student deserves a world-class education**, regardless of learning challenges. The budget includes \$700,000 to ensure that teachers have the tools to help students with dyslexia, dysgraphia and other language disabilities.
- **The Learning Assistance Program (LAP)** gives a boost to struggling students. The budget increases funding for this program by \$48 per student. Funding for the program is now based on poverty rather than test scores. This is a more stable way of providing funds – school districts no longer will lose money when overall test scores improve but some students still need extra help.
- **Skills centers offer career and technical programs** that open up a variety of career paths to students. The budget includes \$1.2 million in incentive grants for school districts to maintain or increase the number of participating students. These grants will help offset the funding lost to districts when students choose to enroll in skills centers.
- **Improve efficiency.** At the state level, we must constantly strive to improve efficiency and accountability and create clear lines of authority. I supported a bill that reconstitutes the roles of the state Board of Education and the Professional Educator Standards Board.
- **School construction.** The construction budget allocates a record \$590 million for school construction during the 05-07 biennium. This is a nearly 40 percent increase for school construction. Our schools statewide are aging, deteriorating and do not provide nearly enough space for the current and projected student populations. This funding will help alleviate those problems.



Senator Eide with Governor Christine Gregoire at the Federal Way Internet Academy bill signing, May 10, 2005. The new law ensures that the academy will continue to receive state funding and establishes accountability standards.

### Higher Education

When students graduate from high school, they must have access to the state's public colleges and universities. We worked hard this session to increase higher education access. We also took steps to ensure that our best college and university instructors stay in Washington, instead of being recruited to other states.

**This year, we funded the largest expansion in financial aid in a generation.**

We also provided more enrollment slots to meet the state's growing need. We strengthened the state's Guaranteed Education Tuition (GET) program to help more families save for college. And we provided faculty members with cost-of-living increases.

The state construction budget includes funding for several projects at Green River Community College and Highline Community College. The budget includes funding for a new science building, a new general classroom building, renovation of the physical education facilities and an addition to the skills support center at Green River Community College. For Highline Community College, the budget includes funding for a new marine science and technology building.



*During the course of our nation's military history, tens of thousands of war dogs served in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia and the Gulf Wars. Pictured are two war dogs and their handlers who visited Olympia for a Senate Resolution that I sponsored honoring War Dog Teams.*

### Construction Budget

Keeping our local economy strong requires a serious investment in infrastructure. Companies want to be located in healthy communities with clean air and water, safe parks and lots of activities for young people.

With that goal in mind, I am very pleased to report that south King County and Federal Way will receive more than \$1 million in state construction funds to pay for the following projects:

- **The Joe's Creek Habitat Restoration Project** – \$856,000 for construction of a salmon habitat restoration project. The project will improve salmon habitat along Joe's Creek, alleviate flow damage and eliminate erosion and flood conditions.
- **The Federal Way Boys & Girls Clubs** – \$300,000 in funding for the 2005-07 biennium.
- **West Hylebos Wetlands Park** – \$100,000 to replace the aging boardwalk.
- **Dash Point State Park** – funding to repair or replace the washed-out bridge on the perimeter trail.

### Operating Budget

Many people said it couldn't be done, but we proved them wrong. Originally facing a \$2.2 billion budget deficit, we passed a budget that invests in public schools, significantly expands access to higher education and invests in healthy families and healthy communities. We did all of this **without a general tax increase** and we adjourned on time.

Some of the local budget highlights include:

- \$50,000 to help fund the inaugural Han Woo-Ri Northwest Korean Sports and Cultural Festival held in Federal Way;
- \$1 million for community service block grants that help fund community action agencies such as our local Multi-Service Center, which provides critical human resources to south King County;
- Maintaining grants that assist local communities with funding for law enforcement and criminal justice.



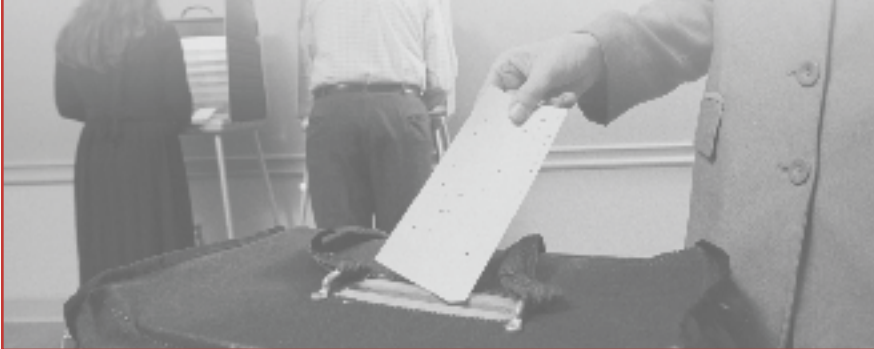
## Election Reform

Washington's 2004 election for governor was the closest governor's race in our nation's history. As a result, the election tested our system in a way it has never been tested before. The election uncovered inconsistencies in vote-counting procedures, confusion among poll workers about provisional ballots and concern about the voting rights of people serving in the military.

We set out this session to ensure fair elections and to restore the public's faith in our election system. We began what will surely be a multi-year task with passage of an omnibus election reform bill that includes sweeping changes to our state's election system. Some of the changes include:

- requiring all poll-site voters to show appropriate identification;
- requiring county auditors to regularly purge the names of convicted felons from their voter rolls; and
- allowing military voters more time to return their ballots.

This measure was part of a larger package of election reform bills we passed this session. These bills will have a large impact on our election process. Voter rolls will be scrubbed to ensure that felons, the deceased and non-citizens are not voting in our elections. Electronic voting machines, currently used in two counties, will be required to have a voter-verifiable paper trail. Military voters will receive additional information to assure their votes are counted.



## Prescription Drugs

Americans pay the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs. Many Washington residents are finding it increasingly difficult to purchase the prescriptions they rely on to stay healthy. Too many are gambling on their health because they can't afford the drug regimen recommended by their doctor.

This year, the Legislature expanded the state's purchasing power to leverage lower prescription drug prices and increased the state's prescription drug program. A bill we passed allows uninsured citizens, private businesses and labor unions to join the state's drug purchasing consortium, making them eligible for a discount on prescription drugs.

We will also be working with Canada and other nations to import safe and effective prescription drugs at more affordable prices. The state Board of Pharmacy will submit a waiver to the federal Food and Drug Administration that will authorize the state to work with wholesalers in Canada and elsewhere. When the waiver is approved, people will be able to purchase imported medicines at their neighborhood pharmacy – in Federal Way, Auburn, Pacific or Algonia.

## Housing Trust Fund

The Housing Trust Fund was established by the Legislature in 1987 to fill the gap created when the federal government withdrew support for housing programs and homelessness was becoming prevalent across the state. People with special needs – such as chronic mental illness or developmental disabilities – and victims of domestic violence are still in critical need of safe housing. The Housing Trust Fund will receive \$100 million in the 05-07 construction budget to address this need.

## Protecting Victims of Violent Crimes

This session, we passed the "Joey Levick Act," a bill I sponsored that has been in the Legislature for several years. Joey, a member of our community, was brutally attacked one night and left laying in a drainage ditch. During the next 14 hours, his assailants returned with friends and relatives who did nothing as he pleaded for help.

The new law requires people to report crimes when they know someone is suffering. This is something we need to do to protect victims of similar crimes and give them a reasonable chance of surviving.





## Protecting Our Environment

Keeping the Evergreen State safe and clean means reducing our reliance on foreign oil and phasing out chemicals that poison our environment and threaten our health.

More than 50 percent of the air pollution in our state can be linked to automobile emissions. This pollution leads to respiratory illnesses, including asthma and even cancer. Legislation passed this year will require new emission standards. Our state joins eight other states that have already passed this legislation, including Oregon and California.

The new standards will help improve public health, reduce our dependence on foreign oil and give consumers more options when they purchase vehicles.

Landmark legislation also passed that will require all public buildings that receive state funding to meet standards that emphasize fresh air, natural light, low toxins and clean storm water. These “green building” standards provide a healthier environment for students and employees, and reduce public spending by reducing energy bills.



### UPDATE !

## Graduated Driver's License

We received some very good news this session about the state's graduated driver's license for teenagers. Three years ago, I sponsored legislation that created the new license for teens. It was signed by then-Gov. Gary Locke and went into effect in July 2001. The law allows 16-year-olds to get their licenses – with restrictions. For the first six months a newly licensed teen can't have passengers under the age of 20 and can't drive between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. Restrictions are lifted if a young driver goes one year without a collision or traffic violation.

Since that bill went into effect, the overall collision rate for 16-year-olds has reduced by nearly half, according to a recent study by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety. This is my proudest accomplishment as a legislator. This law is saving lives!

## Eide Gram – Please Stay in Touch!

Your comments and concerns are always appreciated. Please take a moment to tell me what's on your mind.

Dear Tracey,

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Name, address, phone number and e-mail (optional)

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Please detach, place in envelope and mail to my return address.



### Senate Pages Sponsored by Senator Eide This Session



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